



The “Mighty Eighth” Voice

The newsletter of Headquarters Eighth Air Force

August 2001

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QUICK TAKES

New Staff Sgts. selects

The Air Force has selected 20,793 of 32,170 eligible senior airmen for promotion to staff sergeant for the 01E5 cycle, an overall 64.63-percent selection rate. Of that number, 19 were from Headquarters 8th Air Force

See page 5 for the “Mighty Eighth’s” newest NCOs.

Booster Club update

The following are important Booster Club dates:

- ♦ Oct. 1, Booster Club Elections
- ♦ Nov. 15, Thanksgiving Day potluck luncheon, POC Mrs. Pero at ext. 6-3334
- ♦ Dec. 20, Children’s Christmas Party, POC Chief Master Sgt. Crozier at ext. 6-4313
- ♦ Dec. 8, Eighth Air Force Christmas Party, POC Capt. Carroll at ext. 6-2506

Historical Society Reunion

The 8th Air Force Historical Society holds their 27th annual reunion in Irving, Texas at the Harvey Hotel Oct. 24-29. The society will present two awards to active-duty members; The Pursuit of Excellence Award and The Ira Eaker Outstanding Airmanship Award. For more information, contact Master Sgt. Rick DelaHaya at DSN 781-2156.

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Photo by Master Sgt. Rick DelaHaya

Airman 1st Class Chris Morales (l) and Staff Sgt. Ray Page, observe the latest weather conditions throughout the midwest from the 26th OWS operations room. The forecasters will eventually provide weather support for a seven-state area.

Forecasters go high-tech

26 OWS provides more than predictions from state-of-the art facility

By Master Sgt. Rick DelaHaya
8th Air Force Public Affairs

A new weather lab has appeared in the Ark-La-Tex area. But unlike the labs popping up on television stations forecasting the local weather, this lab will be analyzing and predicting the weather for a seven-state region.

The 26th Operational Weather Squadron was reactivated here on Oct. 1, 1999, and has spent the last 20 months

refurbishing their new home in the 8th Air Force annex building, while bringing in new people and \$2 million worth of state-of-the-art computer systems and technology. Finally, On March 23, 2001, the ribbon was cut, and squadron members finally began operations in their new high-tech facility.

“We’ve been operational now for about three months, and we’re really leading the charge for all the stateside weather squadrons,” said Lt. Col. Harold Elkins, 26th OWS commander. “I’ve been in the weather service for 19 years and remember what we had to work with. The technology that we now have here at

● See **WEATHER**, page 7

Recharge...but get ready!

By Lt. Gen. Thomas Keck
Commander, 8th Air Force

Summer is traditionally a time for cookouts, swimming pools, rest and relaxation. In the military, summer also means peak PCS time and personnel turnover.

While we have plenty of work to do at the Mighty Eighth, we're taking a breather from an intense schedule of exercises and focusing on AIA's integration into the Combat Air Forces. Along with a bit of rest and relaxation, we're also busy saying farewell to those departing Eighth Air Force and spinning up newcomers on Mighty Eighth procedures and standards.

To quote an old ad, "You've come a long way, baby!" This headquarters has carved for itself a unique mission and a sterling reputation over the past few years. Our reward for all that superb work is the knowledge that we've provided a significant contribution to the warfighting capabilities of the Combat Air Forces.

The success that we have achieved in exercises Blue Flag and Roving Sands has catapulted the CAOC-T, Combined Air Operations Center for Training and Transformation, to the leading edge of operational level warfare.

Our RTOC facility and the wealth of expertise that resides in this headquarters is nothing short of outstanding. The rest of the Air Force and our sister services have taken notice.

In January 2002, the Mighty Eighth will host 9th Air Force's Blue Flag, run our own Blue Flag a month later, staff Millennium Challenge/JEFX 02, and top it all off by being the core organization for



Lt. Gen. Tom Keck

the next Unified Endeavor, an immense joint exercise...all of this in addition to championing the integration of information operations and long-range aviation.

On paper, the schedule is busy, but manageable. When you throw in our day-to-day work and the inevitable pop-ups, we're going to be stretched, but I know we're up to the task and will carry out these missions with the same courage, tenacity, character, professionalism and discipline that have been the hallmarks of the Mighty Eighth since our infancy at Wycombe Abbey and over the skies of Europe during World War II.

Relax a bit and enjoy the rest of the summer, but begin preparing now for the upcoming busy schedule. Soon the balloon will go up, declaring once again, "Fight's on!"

Air Force makes changes to force protection programs

WASHINGTON (AFPN)— The word "THREATCON," for terrorist threat condition, is fast becoming a thing of the past. As the military moves ahead, a force protection condition — or FPCON — is the wave of the future.

This change is effective immediately, according to sources from Air Force Security Forces at the Pentagon.

Even though there has been a name change, the condition levels — normal, alpha, bravo, charlie and delta — remain the same. The Defense Department, however, is updating the associated protective measures, and these will be released to the field within the next few months.

The conditions are used to describe progressive levels of protective measures taken in response to terrorist threats to U.S. military facilities and people.

Another change is the classification of the Antiterrorism Plan and FPCON measures. In the past, measures were generally for official use only. Now, the policy requires the AT plan to be classified confidential, at a minimum, if it contains a complete listing of site-specific AT measures linked to a FPCON.

To keep awareness at the forefront, level 1 antiterrorism awareness training is now an annual requirement for all active-duty military, regardless of duty station.

For more information on FPCONs or AT training, contact local installation antiterrorism officers.

The "Mighty Eighth" Voice

Editorial content of The "Mighty Eighth" Voice is edited, prepared and provided by the 8th Air Force Public Affairs office, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. All photographs are official Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated. The contents of The "Mighty Eighth" Voice are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Air Force. People may submit suggestions for stories by calling MSgt Rick DelaHaya in the 8th Air Force Public Affairs Office (318) 456-2156 of DSN 781-2156.



Eighth Air Force Commander
Lt. Gen. Thomas Keck

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Help celebrate thier important milestone

By Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Jim Finch
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

WASHINGTON (AFPN) - We recently announced the release of the staff sergeant selection list - a time for recognition, celebration and congratulations. Promotion to staff sergeant is an important milestone in any Air Force career, since it marks the transition from airman to non-commissioned officer.

Surprisingly, I've heard a few comments expressing concern over the significant number of people accomplishing this milestone, and I've received several inquiries asking why the selection rate was so high.

Basically, we have had an increased number of vacancies at the staff sergeant level, coupled with a decreased pool of eligible senior airmen competing to fill them. This translated to higher selection rates, as evidenced by this year's 64 percent and last year's 50 percent.

The increased vacancies can be attributed in part to the decreased retention of mid-level NCOs in recent years and our

initiative to reshape the balance of NCOs to airmen in our Air Force. In 1999, we received authorization to increase the percentage of the Air Force enlisted force allowed to serve in the top five grades from 48.5 percent to 56 percent. This initiative allowed us to start reducing the average time in service required to promote our mid-level NCOs.

Despite this explanation, some still speculate that the real reason we increased promotion rates was simply to improve retention. While this wasn't the primary goal behind changing our enlisted force structure, we do hope earlier promotions will translate to improved manning and retention. As most probably already know, we are still short mid-level NCOs in many career fields.

Regarding the few comments I've heard about promoting people too quickly, I only need to look at this year's selectees to see we are on track. Of the 20,793 people named on this staff sergeant selection list, more than 90 percent received the top rating on their most recent enlisted performance report. This tells me that at least three people in their rating chain believed

they were ready for immediate promotion and were well-prepared to assume added responsibilities of the next rank.

I personally subscribe to the theory that improving an organization requires everyone to ensure their replacements have the tools, training, and support necessary for continued success. In that vein, I urge everyone currently serving in a supervisory position to help our new staff sergeant selectees adjust to their upcoming role as NCOs. At times, this can be as simple as explaining the logic behind specific decisions or reminding them of the vital part they play in executing our Air Force mission. Keep in mind, these will be the professionals responsible for ensuring most tasks are done correctly. Also, a little recognition for jobs well done can instill great confidence in new supervisors. Lastly, we must provide all selectees the opportunity to complete the Airman Leadership School before their line number comes due.

Remember, developing the next generation of enlisted leaders is an investment in our future. The effort we give today will ensure they are prepared to keep our Air Force the best in the world for years.

Mission, people come first says Jumper

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — The mission comes first. It is a central theme to military service, played over and over from the first day of basic training until retirement.

But most commanders will say that because it takes good people to accomplish the mission, people are as important as the mission itself. Gen. John P. Jumper spent significant time addressing people issues during his recent confirmation hearing.

Jumper, currently commander of Air Combat Command, was confirmed Aug. 3 to become the next Air Force chief of staff, succeeding Gen. Michael E. Ryan, who will retire the end of September.

"Our young men and women in uniform today are no less committed than any generation of Americans has ever been," he said. "They look for leadership, and

when you give them that leadership, they perform with all the patriotism and commitment of any generation."

A number of initiatives designed to reward that commitment have been instituted in past years, including expanded reenlistment bonus incentives and enhanced commissioning opportunities, Jumper said.

More, such as educational incentives for family members, are on the way, he said. One proposal is to transfer all or part of unused Montgomery GI Bill entitlements to family members has significant merit.

"I have always been a firm believer in the theory that we recruit the individual, but retain the family," he said. "We'll work this issue in the manner that best meets the needs of our airmen."

Similar proposals to assist Air Force

men and women were discussed during a recent summit attended by representatives of each major command, along with the Air Force Personnel Center and the Air National Guard, Jumper said.

"We approved 19 initiatives, including career assistance advisors, patient advocates, an enhanced spousal employment program and subsidized in-home childcare," he said.

It is all about improving the lives of bluesuiters and their families around the globe, Jumper said. Doing that will allow them to better focus on the task at hand — defending the nation.

"Our youngsters out there look only for the opportunity to be a part of something that's bigger than they are," he said. "We should strive to improve the quality of their lives in every way we can."

608th ACOMS readies for the fight

By 2nd Lt. Jeffrey Gross
608th ACOMS

How are you spending the last weeks of summer vacation? If you're a member of the 608th Air Communications Squadron's "Mighty Mudbugs," you're probably gearing up for battle.

Without a doubt, August is bringing plenty of heat for the communications professionals to put our combat skills to the test.

The first thing the squadron members have done is share their expertise to the 712th Air Support Operations Squadron at Fort Hood, Texas, in preparation for their upcoming Operational Readiness Inspection.

The first collaboration between units took place in May, with an exercise to establish a tactical link between the two squadrons. Like any first-time event, the exercise did not go perfectly. Things didn't go as smooth as they could, but lessons were learned and applied to our latest train-

ing opportunity that occurred here at Barksdale July 30 to August 2. Our next exercise is scheduled for late October, followed by the actual ORI in November.

The same preparation that went into the ORI is also taking place for the Joint Systems Training Exercise that takes place later this year.

Much like preparing for an ORI, planning communications for an exercise is no small undertaking. This is especially true when your exercise network has to tie together Marines in Japan, naval assets in Virginia, and Air Force units in Germany and the United States. Throw in communications connectivity to a British Airborne Warning and Control unit and you have a Joint Systems Training Exercise.

As the name implies, JSTE is an exercise that focuses on integrating communication and computer systems from the different services to enable the coordination needed for executing an air campaign.

With this year's JSTE fast approach-

ing, our communications planning team is busy working with our sister services to build the robust communications architecture required for the exercise. Much of that work was accomplished during the final planning workshop in the first week of August. Engineering plans were finalized and functional experts met to discuss how every last circuit will be wired.

ORI and Exercise aside, we know what you're thinking; a bunch of engineers and techno-geeks don't know anything about combat. By all means, keep believing this stereotype and you'll soon find yourself on the business end of a Super Soaker!

Yes, this year's ACOMS Combat Dining-In is an open challenge to all 8AF warriors! So rally the troops A1. Collect your intelligence A2. Stockpile your beans and bullets A4. There is no way that A3/5 can dream up a good enough plan for you to defeat 8AF's mightiest of Squadrons—608th ACOMS! D-Day is 24 August.

"Mighty Eighth" Commander Profile

Lt. Col. Eric "Judge" Beene

Squadron: 8th Air Force Commander's Action Group

Family: Wife, Laura

Hometown: Anchorage, Alaska

Education: Bachelor of Science, Physics; Master of Science, Operations Research; Master of Airpower Art and Science

Past Assignments:

-ACSC and SAAS - Maxwell AFB, Ala.

-Air Force Studies and Analyses (AFSAA) - Pentagon

-F-15E Instructor and Flight Examiner - Elmendorf AFB, Alaska

-F-111E Instructor - RAF Upper Heyford, United Kingdom

-FB-111A Radar Navigator - Pease AFB, N.H.

Off-duty time is for: Family, friends and watching SEC football

Hobbies: Collecting autographed books, traveling, and reading

Goals:

Continue the integration of the Information Operations community into the "Mighty Eighth" and the CAF. Enhance 8th

Air Force's warfighting capability with its changing forces and faces. Ensure everyone in the Air Force and the Department of Defense knows the astounding capabilities of the "Mighty Eighth."

What challenges do you foresee as the new CAG:

Making sure all members of Eighth Air Force understand where we are going and what we can accomplish as a team. Our future

is very exciting, and I want everyone to share my enthusiasm.

Advice to those pursuing an Air Force career:

Don't lose sight of your goals, despite the challenges you encounter along the way. Find a mentor and use the advice he or she provides. Set your priorities and stick to them.



Eighth Air Force Salutes!

Staff Sergeant Selects

- | | |
|---|--|
| ♦Eric Allen
26th Operational Weather Squadron | ♦Jamie Burnett
608th Air Intelligence Squadron |
| ♦Joseph Forsten
26th Operational Weather Squadron | ♦Joshua Crosby
608th Air Intelligence Squadron |
| ♦Deanna Stoddard
26th Operational Weather Squadron | ♦Kenneth Dickerson
608th Air Intelligence Squadron |
| ♦Brandon Tolson
26th Operational Weather Squadron | ♦Danielle Hernandez
608th Air Intelligence Squadron |
| ♦Travis Wooten
26th Operational Weather Squadron | ♦Lloyd Towns
608th Air Intelligence Squadron |
| ♦Michael Augustine
608th Air Communications Squadron | ♦Alisha Williams
608th Air Intelligence Squadron |
| ♦Leo Mouton Jr.
608th Air Communications Squadron | ♦Christina Falcon-Garcia
608th Combat Operations Squadron |
| ♦J. C. Rainey
608th Air Communications Squadron | ♦James Martinez
608th Combat Operations Squadron |
| ♦Jeremy Woods
608th Air Communications Squadron | ♦Jonathan Wernli
608th Combat Plans Squadron |
| ♦Anthony Bell Jr.
608th Air Intelligence Squadron | |

Quarterly Award winners

Congratulations to the following Headquarters 8th Air Force second Quarter Award winners:

Airman of the Quarter

- ♦Airman 1st Class Eric Broadie
3rd Air Support Operations Group

NCO of the Quarter

- ♦Staff Sgt. Mellissa Center
608th Air Support Squadron

CGO of the Quarter

- ♦Capt. Jenise Carroll
8th Air Force Personnel

SNCO of the Quarter

- ♦Master Sgt. Stephen Lucas
3rd Air Support Operations Group

Jr. Civ. of the Quarter

- ♦Medina Paro
608th Air Communications Squadron

Sr. Civ. of the Quarter

- ♦Tillus Jenkins
608th Combat Plans Squadron

Aerospace Warrior Attitude



Senior Airman James Martinez

608th Combat Operations Squadron

Years of service: 4 years

Hometown: Mililani, Hawaii

Family: Single

Job title: Track Data and Interface Control Technician

Primary duties: Maintain a clean and recognizable air picture for the Joint Forces Air Component Commander; unit Deployment Manager; unit SORTS monitor; and unit PHA monitor

Most rewarding job aspect: When I realize the importance of what I do and exactly how my job affects the entire mission.

Goals: Finish my degree, buy my first home and travel around Europe

Hobbies: I like traveling, bodyboarding, snowboarding, and playing and listening to music.

What motivates your winning attitude: The recognition I receive and the overall sense of accomplishment I feel when the job is done.

Favorite aspects of Barksdale: I enjoy being assigned here at 8th Air Force and the people I work with everyday.

Editor's note: To nominate an Aerospace Warrior, the individual's supervisor should call the Public Affairs office at 456-2156. Please include the person's full name, rank and phone number.

Lajes NCO returns after testing waters

Staff Sgt. Beverly Isik
65th Air Base Public affairs

LAJES FIELD, AZORES, Portugal — Civilian life “ain’t all it’s cracked up to be,” according to Staff Sgt. Mike Roderigues.

He should know. He separated from the Air Force and spent the next nine years trying to get back in.

Now a member of the 65th Transportation Squadron, Roderigues joined the Air Force in 1986 after high school and served four years as a contracting specialist. But, he didn’t feel appreciated, so when his four years were up, he made the big step into the “real world.”

But he soon discovered it was a step in the wrong direction.

It wasn’t because he couldn’t find a good-paying job. In fact, he walked out the front gates of K. I. Sawyer Air Force Base, Mich., into a job with a well-known speaker manufacturing company.

“I went home and got a good job,” the Massachusetts native said. “I started out making 10 bucks an hour and I could easily work my way up to 15, which in 1990 was a lot of money.”

But he said money isn’t everything.

“I spent nine years trying to get back on active duty,” he said. “From day one, I knew I had made a mistake.”

He worked about a year making speakers, but it wasn’t nearly as fulfilling as the Air Force had been.

“I just got bored and I saw no advancement opportunities,” he said. “I made speakers — that’s all I did. And talk about not getting any recognition. I thought my Air Force supervisors hadn’t appreciated what I did. At my new job, the supervisor never even came by once to give you a pat on the back or say ‘you did a good job.’ ”

Looking back, Roderigues said, “I started thinking, the lack of recognition and appreciation were the main reasons I decided to get out of the Air Force. At least in the Air Force, I understood what I was doing for the mission — not just making speakers.”

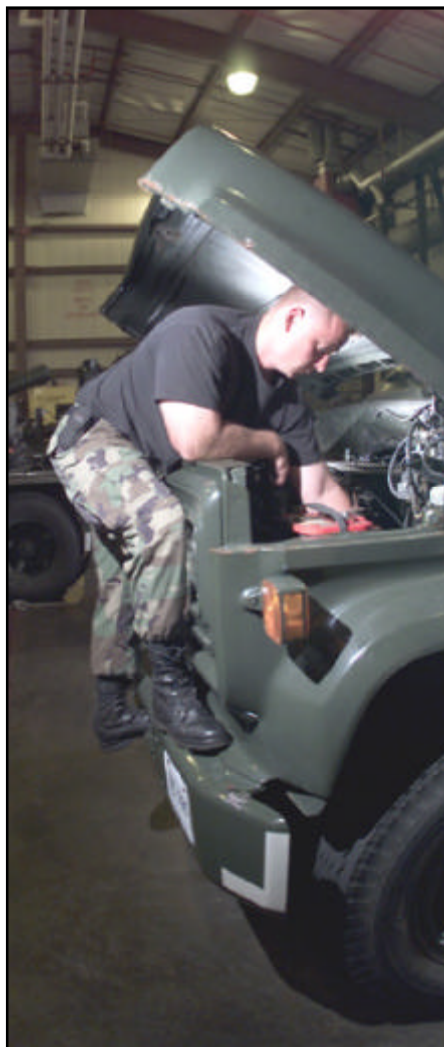


Photo by Senior Airman Michael Holzworth
Staff Sgt. Mike Roderigues replaces a starter on a fuel truck. Roderigues re-entered the Air Force after a nine-year absence.

When Desert Storm kicked off, a lot of Reservists were activated and Roderigues was anxious to volunteer. He gave up his \$10-hour job, hoping for a chance to deploy to Saudi Arabia. He only made it as far as Westover, Mass., just 50 miles from his hometown of Linwood.

“It was one of the hubs for people traveling to and from the desert.”

He worked there as a mechanic for about three months, then spent a few months working in the welcome center.

From there he moved south to San

Antonio and did some Reserve time there while working with a nationwide grocery distributor. He did a lot of Reserve time and traveled around Europe with a base closure team.

“Being a Reservist never had anything to do with the money,” he said. “I was doing it because I missed the Air Force.”

Looking back, he said the thing he missed most was the camaraderie.

“It’s totally different in the Air Force than it is outside,” he said. “You don’t get the closeness with coworkers on the outside.”

“In the military, we all understand. If we go to war, I’m going to war and I’m going to war with you. So you get the understanding you could end up dying together. You bond more.”

The Air Force family taking care of its own is not just a cliché for Roderigues.

“I believe that. We help each other out. On the outside, you don’t often see that.”

After the base closure team dissolved, he moved to North Carolina to work with a Reserve unit there. That’s where he found out the Air Force was accepting prior service members back on active duty.

“It took me a year to get back in, but I was relieved.”

Now he has a job enjoys and said he’ll have 26 years in by the time he retires. He said there’s no question about it, he’s in for the long haul this time. In fact he just re-enlisted for six more years recently.

Before making the decision to get out, Roderigues recommends talking things over with someone.

“Talk to people like me who have been on the outside looking in. Or set up an appointment with the career assistance advisor,” he said. “They’re out there trying to give people information so they don’t make the same mistake I made.”

“In the military, airmen are our future,” he said. “Let’s take care of our airmen and the airmen will take care of us.”

And what is his advice to others who are straddling the re-enlistment fence, “Don’t let the little things force you out. I learned my lesson the hard way.”

● **WEATHER, from page 1**

our fingertips is very impressive.”

This is the fourth time the weather squadron has been a part of 8th Air Force, and was reactivated in a restructuring move that consolidated weather support activities. Because of a boom in weather information technology, the Air Force looked at rebuilding the weather support concepts and infrastructure and find ways to accomplish the mission faster and cheaper.

“That’s the main reason we are here,” Elkins said. “We came up with a regionalized approach to providing some of the core weather support products. That meant that we installed automated sensors at field units, and people were reduced at base weather stations and moved to the new weather squadrons. Because of this new approach, we’ll be able to provide a better product to our customer that’s focused on their specific mission needs.”

Currently, the squadron has taken over weather operations in Oklahoma and Kansas, and expects to take over operations in Texas later this fall. Eventually, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi will round out their seven-state area of responsibility. Not only will the squadron provide day-to-day forecasts for active duty units, but also guard and reserve units, as well as weather support for Army operations.

“We’re providing customer support to not only 17 active-duty facilities, but twice that amount for the guard and reserves and Army drop zones and maneuver areas,” added Elkins. “It’s challenging, but if you look at how we’ve done things in the past 50 years, our basic processes hadn’t changed. But now with the reengineering and innovations available to us, we are leading all the CONUS weather squadrons in forecast performance to all our customers.”

But the responsibilities of the weather squadron don’t stop at providing day-to-day forecasts. According to Elkins, they have two other important

missions...providing support at the operational level of war and providing a continuous on-the-job training for new personnel.

During the Air Tasking Order production cycle, he explained that there are a lot moving parts than just identifying targets.

“The commander needs to know what the weather will be today, tomorrow and 72-hours from now, and how it will affect the mission,” he said. “So we have to know how the weather can effect a certain type of weapon or if the weather would force the mission to be cancelled. So our combat weather flight really is in the thick of things when exercises are held at the Readiness Training and Operations Center.”

According to Elkins, the flight is able to provide situation awareness and accurate weather forecasts to mission planners and the intelligence community during any contingency operation that 8th Air Force may be involved in.

“With the information we provide, they can tailor it to specific areas of the mission, with emphasis on target weather, refueling tracks and recovery bases. We’ve even sent our folks to CAOC-X and had them bring back some of the latest innovations with them so we can rapidly prototype them for use here. So in our short time since being assigned to the ‘Eighth,’ we’re already at the front lines.”

The third mission, according to Elkins, will be continuous on-the-job training of new personnel. Most of the expected new members of the squadron will be first-term airmen right out of technical school who will spend their first two-to-three years here learning and honing their craft.

“We’ve totally eliminated the need for new airmen to go out to a field unit after tech school to learn how to be an observer for a few years, then back to school again to learn how to forecast,” Elkins said. “Here, they’ll be mentored by more experienced people, and when they leave here after three years, they’ll be dual qualified as an observer and

forecaster. It just made sense to challenge our airmen and build our career field this way.”

To accomplish this, the operations center houses numerous three-person weather “cockpits,” an innovation Elkins said will help produce better trained personnel and provide specific weather information tailored to the mission.

Surrounded by at least 12 different computer terminals, the more experienced mentor or “zone boss” will sit in the middle of the “cockpit” with the two trainees on either side. From this station, they will be able to dial up via computer, Doppler radar images, the latest satellite pictures, numerical models of the atmosphere, and any other piece of relevant information needed from around the world.

“We can take a trainee, and run simulator programs for any zone or area in the world,” Elkins added. “This gives us the ability let our new airmen see actual weather patterns that have happened and let them forecast based on what they are seeing.”

The weather forecasters can then provide the standard terminal aerodrome forecast that goes out on the weather wire, as well as watches and warnings. This is important, said 2nd Lt. Jim Harbaugh, “A” flight chief, so that customers have a constant situational awareness regarding weather threats that may impact their operations.

“This is very innovative in that we can tailor each cockpit to exactly what information our field units need,” he said speaking from the operations room. “Each station has the ability to see what the weather is now and what it’s going to be.”

“We’re very excited about the challenges that face us here,” Elkins continued. “We have a lot of innovations and firsts here, and we’re leading all the other weather squadrons in performance and capabilities. That’s not by accident, but by design. My expectation is that we’ll always be in front, leading the pack with our people, our systems and our capabilities.”

